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FROM: Marianne Smith Edge, MS, RD, LD, FADA
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International Food Information Council (IFIC) and IFIC Foundation

RE: 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee Public Comments

The [International Food Information Council \(IFIC\)](#) and [IFIC Foundation](#) appreciate the opportunity to submit comments to the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC). Our ensuing comments are constructed with the 2010 DGAC “Needs for Future Research” in mind. We believe our years of consumer research and related peer-reviewed articles will be of great value to the DGAC in supporting innovative ways to motivate the American public toward more healthful lifestyles and behaviors.

IFIC and IFIC Foundation are nonprofit organizations based in Washington, DC. The mission of IFIC is to effectively communicate science-based information about food safety and nutrition to health professionals, government officials, educators, journalists, and consumers. The mission of the IFIC Foundation is to effectively communicate science-based information about health, nutrition and food safety for the public good. Both IFIC and the IFIC Foundation receive primary funding from food, beverage and agricultural companies that support our missions. We also receive government grants and contributions from other individuals, foundations and associations.

IFIC and IFIC Foundation consumer research has been exploring Americans’ attitudes toward nutrition and health for more than two decades with our signature research project being the annual IFIC Foundation *Food & Health Survey*. We are dedicated to providing consumers with clear, accurate advice and actionable tips on how science-based information related to nutrition, health, and food safety can be applied to their daily lives.

PROTEIN

RESEARCH NEED ADDRESSED:

The 2010 DGAC identified a number of specific research needs related to protein. The findings below address general research needs around consumers’ protein intakes, perceptions, and attitudes.

RELEVANCE:

Protein is on many consumers' minds and there is a need to understand consumer perceptions and attitudes in terms of protein. The IFIC Foundation 2013 *Food and Health Survey* provides valuable insights into Americans' protein intakes, perceptions and attitudes. These findings frame up the current American's diet, allowing an understanding of their beliefs around protein which include why they are consuming it and how often.

KEY POINTS FROM IFIC FOUNDATION 2013 *FOOD AND HEALTH SURVEY*:

- Nearly six out of ten Americans are trying to consume packaged foods with protein. And, the most common reason for eating protein is to have a balanced diet, though many consume protein to gain energy, strength, and satiety.
- Protein is widely believed to be beneficial for people of all stages of life, though it is most likely to be seen as beneficial for teens. More Americans believe children and teens need higher amounts of protein this year.
- The most common reason for eating protein is to have a balanced diet, though many consume protein to gain energy, strength and satiety.
 - Women are more likely to try to consume protein to aid in weight loss.
 - Men are more likely to try to consume protein to build or maintain muscle strength.

KEY POINTS FROM IFIC FOUNDATION 2012 *FOOD AND HEALTH SURVEY*:

- While 84 percent of Americans believe that it is easy to incorporate protein into their diet, a quarter of Americans also believe that these foods are too expensive to consume as much as they would like.
 - Those with **low household income** are more likely to believe protein is too expensive, especially those with incomes under \$35K (35%), but is still evident among those with at least \$75K in household income (17%).
 - **Younger consumers**, ages 18 to 34, are twice as likely as the oldest—those 65 to 80—to feel protein is too expensive to eat as much as they would like (31% vs. 15%).
 - **Hispanics** are more likely than Whites or African Americans to feel price limited in their purchase of protein (33% vs. 24% and 22%, respectively).
 - **Obese** individuals are more likely than those who are less overweight or who have normal to low BMI to indicate their protein consumption is limited by its expense (31% vs. 23% and 22%, respectively).